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ABSTRACT

The problems of international educational research exchange were examined. The definition of educational research is not universal. Styles and emphasis of research differ. European publications are similar to United States publications. The research methodology used by most Third World countries is often radically different from American methods. The American researcher should be acquainted with the philosophical foundation of education in a foreign country and aware of current educational research conducted there in order to prevent misunderstandings. Sources for this knowledge include American graduate students with a working knowledge of other languages; educational researchers and professors of education; and non-American graduate students living in the United States. The author recommends several methods for the resolution of these information exchange problems. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) could be instrumental in this effort. (DWH)

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Problems and Issues in International Educational Research Exchange

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TM 820 357

Paper presented at the 1982 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association - March 19-23, New York, New York.

This paper will discuss the following questions:

1. Is educational research a universal term? If not, what does it mean to various educators?
2. How can a researcher in the United States know what research takes place in other countries and vice versa?
3. Does A. E. R. A. have a role?
   - 3.1 relationship with international organizations, e.g., UNESCO and the World Bank.
   - 3.2 the development of a mechanism to ensure the flow of educational research information to and from the United States.

Within the past five years I have been involved in the work of UNESCO in some of the Third World countries. These countries ask for assistance in establishing research centers or departments in the hope that such centers will help solve some of the educational problems facing a developing country. During a follow-up visit to one of the centers, I met the person in charge to discuss with him what the center is doing in research. There seems to be some confusion about the definition of "research". The known types of research include: action research, analytical research, applied research, basic research, consumer research, curriculum research, and deliberative research (Good, 1959). However, what I found was "none of the above." Many of the publications I examined in that center have slipped into being articles or essays expressing the views of the writers. Examining such documents, especially from Third World countries, and comparing them with publications in the United States, e.g., Review of Educational Research, one can notice pronounced difference in style and format.

On the other hand, research in some other countries is strikingly similar to American research. If we consider the A. E. R. A. annual program a sample of what is taking place around this country, one can see that there is heavy emphasis on research related to evaluation and more recently on policy making. Such trends may sound foreign to researchers in other countries but reading and understanding of the reasons behind such movement will clarify for them the noticed emphasis.

Dockrell (1980) showed that the influence of the American school of research is rather obvious in some of the foreign educational research publications, specifically in Australia, Britain, Finland, and India. However, Dockrell points out one or two major differences between American and British research. The British for example, lean towards theoretical research while the Americans are more pragmatic. Another point Dockrell raised is the possibility of misunderstanding between the two sides of the Atlantic. Using Wilde's aphorism about England and the United States, Dockrell says "two countries divided by a common language". It is no wonder then that countries using other languages misunderstand American research and vice versa. Styles and emphasis differ and in some cases, the meaning of "research" is quite different.

A review of educational research publications in the United States reveals that there are standard steps followed by researchers, i.e., review of literature, discussion of method (to describe the sample, instruments, procedures), collection of data and data analysis, description of results, and summary and/or discussion. If you review some of the publications in other countries, you will find that the European publications bear a marked resemblance to the United States publications. However, reviews of publications from the Third World countries indicates a totally different

approach, unless, of course, the researcher has been trained in the States or in Europe. In many cases, statistical analysis is almost unknown or deliberately omitted in research conducted by Third World countries. Percentage may be the only presentation. Some articles confine themselves to reviewing limited research and then coming to conclusions, which frequently present a point of view rather than a research finding.*

If one can overcome or even overlook the issue of methodology, exchange of published research requires still another kind of clarification. A piece of research recently completed in a Third World country may look like something written about ten or twenty years ago in the United States or in a European country. The American reader may overlook such publications. However, such publicating could be a "break-through" in that country, a beginning of a "new" trend, or the climax of a series of research studies.

The natural second question would be: If misunderstanding is likely to happen, how can we minimize such misunderstanding? Another related question might be why do researchers in the United States need to know of research in other countries?

Let me start with the second question first. Research in the United States, in <u>some</u> places, shows a phenomenon that should be carefully watched. Some American researchers are becoming "technicians" rather than researchers. An interest in methodology is overcoming the reason(s) for conducting the research. Frequently we find graduate students looking for experiments to conduct for dissertations, thesises, or even term papers.

*I have been involved in discussion of educational research with some countries of the Third World. One who is in charge of those centers was trying to convince me that people around him wouldn't understand research if he does it using the American approach. Further probe revealed that he himself has no background in research or rudiments of statistics.

Emphasis seems to be on a review of literature followed by elaborate methodology. The foundation or rationale upon which such experiments are conducted sometimes get lost. This is one reason why American researchers should be in touch with the work of foreign researchers.

In answer to the first question regarding how to minimize misunderstanding, the American researcher must be acquainted with the philosophical foundation of education in a foreign country and be up-to-date with the educational research in that country. I would hesitate to ask how many American researchers have read Australian, New Zealand, or British educational research within the past year. If this is the situation with educational research written in English, what about other languages?

This question led me to think of three valuable sources:

1. American graduate students who have a working knowledge of other languages.
2. Non-American graduate students who live in the U.S. either for a limited time or on a more permanent basis.
3. Professors of education.

American Graduate Students. Information about the number of graduate students in 1980 was published in The Chronicle of Higher Education (December 9, 1981). Using available information from the Modern Language Association, 32,196 American students are studying other languages. One must consider that some students could be enrolled in more than one language, while many universities dropped all language requirements for graduate students in education. Consequently, as few as 2% of the number of graduate students studying foreign languages might be education majors.

Still fewer numbers would be counted if "fluency" in other languages is used as a criteria. This suggests that there may be as few as 200 graduate students in education fluent in other languages. Most of these are studying European languages. The breakage of numbers and language is in Appendix A.

Non-American Graduate Students. Appendix B, taken from The Chronicle quoting the Institute of International Education, indicates the number of foreign students without a breakdown into graduate students and undergraduates. We can probably assume that most of the foreign students are graduate students, yet it would be safer to count for only 50% of the 274,330.* Most of the students came from the Third World where industry and agriculture take priority over social sciences. Once again one may assume that no more than 2% of these students are in the field of education. This means that about 2,000 foreign students are studying education in the United States. The number will be growing until the 1990's when foreign students will number about 1 million (The New York Times, 1982).

Professors/Researchers. A good number of the professors of education and educational researchers have a working knowledge of other languages and they should be provided with research from foreign publications.

The purpose of this analysis is to show why we may have many researchers and potential researchers who could read in the major languages around the world and who are affected by the American school of research. To encourage more exchanges is simply a matter of organization of efforts.

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*A committee from the American Council on Education stated that the number is about 312,000 in 1980-1981. The New York Times, Section 13, January 10, 1982.

What can A. E. R. A. do?

I recommend the following points and leave them for discussion:

1. Survey the membership of A. E. R. A. and identify the languages that the members master and can read comfortably in, with a good knowledge of the geographical area.
2. Group these researchers and encourage them to get in touch with countries of interest. Start the communication with educational researchers in these areas. Graduate students from other countries studying education in American universities can play a major role in this effort. Annually, each group can discuss its findings and report to the A. F. R. A. in form of a session during the annual meeting.
3. Provide educational researchers in these countries of interest with a summary of published research in the United States.
4. Collect a list of American educational researchers who will be on sabbatical and get in touch with UNESCO and the World Bank. Researchers could spend a year or so doing research abroad in their areas of preference.
5. Collect names of researchers or potential researchers who could be invited to the various colleges and universities outside the U.S.

(4 & 5 could take the form of exchange of professors.)

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"Appendix A"

Language Enrollments

Language Enrollments

Number of Students Registered in Fall, 1980

	Fall, 1980 registrations			Change Since 1977
	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total	
Arabic	3,056	410	3,466	+ 12.9%
Chinese	10,746	620	11,366	+ 15.9%
French	242,709	5,652	248,361	+ 0.9%
German	122,364	4,546	126,910	- 6.2%
Greek (ancient)	17,288	4,823	22,111	- 14.4%
Hebrew	15,303	4,126	19,429	+ 0.4%
Italian	33,958	833	34,791	+ 4.4%
Japanese	11,130	376	11,506	+ 7.3%
Latin	24,250	785	25,035	+ 2.6%
Portuguese	4,599	295	4,894	- 1.2%
Russian	22,750	1,237	23,987	- 13.7%
Spanish	371,958	7,421	379,379	+ 0.7%
Other	12,530	1,072	13,602	- 15.1%
Total	892,641	32,196	924,837	- 0.9%

Registrations in Other Languages

Afrikaans	5	Estonian	4	Lithuanian	47	Tagalog	263
Akkadian	95	Finnish	152	Malay-Indonesian	14	Tahitian	9
Albanian	2	Fon	1	Malayalam	4	Tamil	25
Amharic	9	Fulani	3	Marathi	6	Tartar	1
Aramaic	142	Gaelic	15	Mende	2	Telegu	9
Armenian	231	Georgian	5	Mongolian	13	Thai	80
Assyrian	2	Greek (modern)	830	Mongolian (classical)	7	Tibetan	56
Aymara	5	Hausa	70	Navajo	225	Tlingit	5
Azeri	5	Hawaiian	610	Nepali	6	Tongan	11
Balinese	1	Hindi	198	Norwegian	1616	Tuamotuan	2
Bambara	6	Hindi-Urdu	76	Ojibway	84	Turkic	22
Basque	21	Hittite	6	Pali	24	Turkish	147
Bengali	18	Hungarian	98	Persian	703	Turkish (Ottoman)	5
Bulgarian	2	Ibo	5	Polish	1268	Tuvin	3
Burmese	1	Icelandic	8	Quechua	30	Ugaritic	22
Cambodian	4	Icelandic (old)	23	Rumanian	187	Ukrainian	111
Cantonese	39	Ilokano	17	Samoan	18	Urdu	23
Catalan	19	Indonesian	113	Sanskrit	218	Uzbek	12
Chagatai	2	Iranian	20	Serbo-Croatian	182	Vedic	1
Cherokee	29	Irish	13	Shona	13	Vietnamese	74
Coptic	12	Javanese	9	Sinhala	2	Welsh	8
Creole, Haitian	13	Kikongo	1	Slavonic (O.C.)	44	Wolof	51
Crow	16	Korean	365	Slovak	21	Xhosa	1
Czech	151	Krio	24	Slovenian	21	Yiddish	944
Dakota	99	Lakota	67	Sumerian	15	Yoruba	127
Danish	293	Lao	2	Swahili	576	Yupic	85
Dutch	500	Latvian	1	Swedish	1575	Zulu	41
Egyptian	44	Lingala	1	Syriac	50		

Note: Based on returns from 835 two-year institutions and 1,506 four-year institutions reporting enrollments in one or more foreign languages.

Chronicle of Higher Education
December 9, 1981, page 16

SOURCE: MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

"Appendix B"

Where They Come From

Where They Come From

Rank	Country or territory	Students	Rank	Country or territory	Students
1.	Iran	47,550	26.	Brazil	2,870
2.	Taiwan	19,460	27.	China	2,770
3.	Nigeria	17,350	28.	Israel	2,710
4.	Canada	14,320	29.	Cuba	2,640
5.	Japan	13,500	30.	Turkey	2,600
6.	Venezuela	11,750	31.	France	2,570
7.	Saudi Arabia	10,440	32.	Jamaica	2,400
8.	Hong Kong	9,660	33.	Kenya	1,930
9.	India	9,250	34.	Egypt	1,860
10.	Lebanon	6,770	35.	Peru	1,800
11.	Mexico	6,730	36.	Ghana	1,790
12.	Thailand	6,550	37.	Ethiopia	1,570
13.	Vietnam	6,490	38.	Pacific Islands	1,570
14.	Republic of Korea	6,150	39.	Australia	1,530
15.	Jordan	6,140	40.	Bahamas	1,480
16.	Malaysia	6,010	41.	Iraq	1,460
17.	United Kingdom	4,440	42.	El Salvador	1,450
18.	Colombia	3,930	43.	Singapore	1,320
19.	Greece	3,750	44.	Panama	1,300
20.	Philippines	3,390	45.	Trinidad and Tobago	1,300
21.	West Germany	3,310	46.	Netherlands	1,290
22.	Indonesia	3,250	47.	Italy	1,250
23.	Libya	3,080	48.	Chile	1,230
24.	Kuwait	2,990	49.	Ecuador	1,210
25.	Pakistan	2,990	50.	Bangladesh	1,180

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Source: Institute of International Education